



The Way Back Home by TwoPeonies

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Summary: Mike and El get another chance to express their feelings.

The Way Back Home

Eyes wide and still, boring into his. Orbs of deep brown, like planets from a strange universe. His gaze wavers. A second is all it takes. To reverse time and space. To lose himself again. Or to find, instead.

"Mike," she says, inaudibly. Raindrops slide off her skin, dripping from her nose, diluting blood and staining her lips a pale pink.

His fingers itch to touch her, mind whirrs with unspoken words.

"Mike," she repeats, waiting. Eyes just as wide, and just as unmoving. Chest rising and falling rapidly, betraying the stillness of her posture.

Two strides cover the distance between them. She breathes in sharply before contact, then releases the breath, body easing into his embrace. His skin is fire where it touches hers.

Her eyes are full of concern when he pulls away.

"El, I thought I – I thought we lost you." He says, eyes following her slowly outstretching arm. "How did you get out?"

She presses her hand against his chest. It stays there for a long moment, her mouth twitching as though trying to understand something. She looks up at him, asks, "What's wrong?"

"Oh," Mike says, breaking eye contact. "Uh, my heart is beating very fast."

"Why?" She asks, predictably.

"Because I'm surprised to see you," He says. "And I'm so happy you're back."

"Okay," she nods, the edges of her mouth upturning just a smidge.

He brings her home, just as he had done mere months ago, during their first encounter. Wet, scared and confused. Both of them.

"I'll bring some clothes," he says as she sits on the familiar couch in

the basement. "Don't – don't go anywhere, please."

"Promise," she whispers.

He should call Dustin and Lucas, at the least. Will too. But he doesn't want to, not yet anyway. Not when she's still so wet and cold and scared.

"You can dry your hair with the towel," he says in reply to her quizzical expression. "It's gotten longer,"

She touches it as though only just aware of the wet locks. "Pretty?" she whispers, more to herself than Mike. He only nods.

"El, can you tell me how you got out?" He asks. "And what happened?" Turns around quickly when she pulls the grimy shirt off her body.

"When you're ready," he adds after a moment, regretting his own pushiness.

"Mike," she calls after a few minutes, and he turns back around, unsure. But she's fully dressed now, looking at him intently. "Sit, please."

He obeys, sitting down so close, yet attempting to keep distance. El looks as though she's trying to suppress a smile.

"Happy," she says, then pauses as though searching for another appropriate word. "I'm so happy." She doesn't find one.

"Me too," he says, smiling back. Then looks away, almost ashamed. "I uh, I really missed you."

"Missed?" El echoes.

"It's when you're really sad because someone – someone you really like is gone."

His ears burn red hot, and he looks away from her piercing gaze. When he looks up into her eyes again, it's like reliving a moment from a past life. They lean into each other, inch by torturous inch.

Her eyes drift between his eyes and mouth, and he watches the minute movements of her face, the twitching of her mouth as it moves closer and closer towards his. Her lips feel wet when they brush against his. She smells like rain and earth. Like being lost in the forest, but knowing your way back home.

"I missed you too," she breathes when they pull away. It's only a moment later when she takes his hand and places it on her own chest. The beating of her heart is rapid and erratic against his skin. "I'm happy I'm home," she says.

A/N: Can't believe I didn't watch the show until now! It's absolutely amazing and the little friendship+ between Mike and Eleven is something special. So pure and adorable! Let me know what you think of this short little drabble. I just had a lot of feelings about what their potential reunion would look like but I wanted to keep it super vague.